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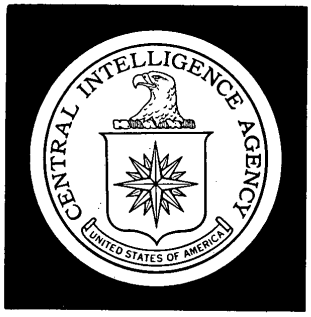

The President's Daily Brief

20 May 1971

46

~~*Top Secret*~~

50X1

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

20 May 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Moscow's concern over the recent political upheavals in Egypt is evident [redacted] *(Page 1)* 50X1

Current Chinese Communist production rates of the MIG-19 and other military aircraft are discussed on *Page 2*.

[redacted] 50X1
Jordan 50X1
[redacted] *(Page 3)* 50X1

The Soviets have successfully launched a Mars probe on their tenth try. *(Page 4)*

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USSR-EGYPT

Soviet news media continue to report on the changes in Cairo factually. In the only public comment thus far, "a responsible official source" in Moscow is quoted as saying that the USSR views the governmental changes in Cairo as an "internal matter."

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] *despite its concern, Moscow wants to avoid overreacting.* [redacted] 50X1 50X1

The extent of the Soviet setback is still not clear, probably not even to the Soviets. A common theme in comments by Soviet officials is that the recent course of events took Moscow by surprise and that the Soviets are worried over the implications of a possible Egyptian-US rapprochement. Moscow has previously experienced reverses in Cairo and probably feels that in the present circumstances it would be imprudent to get involved until the situation has sorted itself out. The USSR, however, is not likely to remain on the sidelines for long if it concludes its interests have been seriously threatened.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

Our analysis of satellite photography [redacted] suggests that the production of MIG-19s could now be as high as 50 per month, compared to an average monthly rate of 35 last year. The latest photography showed 243 MIG-19s at the Shenyang airframe plant and 94 at a nearby airfield. 50X1 50X1

This is the largest number of MIG-19s seen at the plant and the first sighting of more than a few at the airfield. The reason for this accumulation in the Shenyang area is unclear; it may simply reflect the inability of the air force to absorb new aircraft as rapidly as they are being produced.

[redacted] 50X1

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JORDAN [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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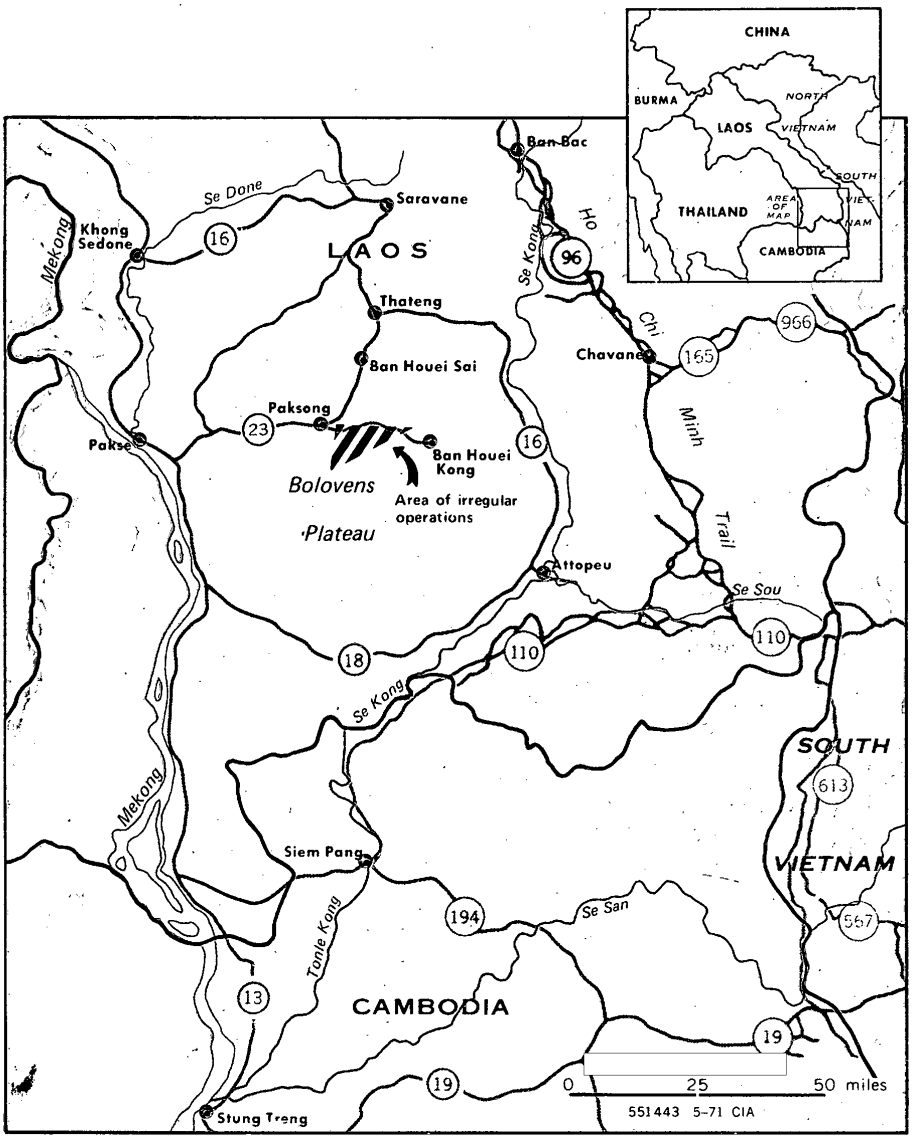

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NOTES

USSR: The Soviets successfully launched an unmanned Mars probe from Tyuratam yesterday, using an SL-12 booster. [redacted] 50X1 50X1

[redacted] The probe, labeled Mars 2, probably is intended to soft-land a scientific package or to put a payload in orbit around the planet when it reaches there in late November. If the Mars probe succeeds in its mission, it will be the first successful one in ten attempts made by the Soviets since 1960. 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

Laos: There have been no major North Vietnamese attacks since yesterday, when the Communists forced government troops to abandon Ban Houei Kong, the last government base on the Bolovens Plateau. The irregular task force operating between Ban Houei Kong and Paksong is continuing, however, to make some progress toward its high ground objectives near Paksong, although so far it has had only limited contact with the enemy. There have been several recent reports that Communist units are operating west of the Bolovens, suggesting that the North Vietnamese may intend to launch harassing attacks along Route 13 both north and south of Pakse. Two small-unit clashes occurred some 30 miles south of Pakse on 18 and 19 May.

Thailand - North Vietnam: Talks to arrange the repatriation of some 40,000 North Vietnamese refugees living in northeast Thailand have been suspended as a result of Hanoi's claim that the present "war" situation in North Vietnam would make such repatriation "unsafe." Both sides have used the negotiations, which resumed last fall when Hanoi sent a team to Bangkok, to raise political matters in corridor discussions. Hanoi's decision to withdraw its delegation suggests that it sees little reason at this time for trying to pursue a political dialogue with Bangkok.

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